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BUSINESS

MARCH 1985 \$2.00

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FRIEND OR FOE?

Special Interview On Page 44



Please send me more information
on Jayco RVs and dealer programs.
I currently deal in these product lines:

I'm interested in Jayco ☐ Fold-downs
☐ Travel Trailers ☐ Mini Motorhomes
☐ Fifth Wheels ☐ Truck Campers

Name _____

Title _____

Dealership _____

Address _____

City _____

State _____ Zip _____

Telephone _____

Jayco, Inc.
P.O. Box 460
Middlebury, IN 46540

RVB 3/85

RV BUSINESS/3 MARCH '85

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Perspective

An analysis of RVB's monthly survey
of its Dealer Advisory Board Members
GAYLORD MAXWELL

	NEW						USED					
	FOR MONTH			YEAR-TO-DATE			FOR MONTH			YEAR-TO-DATE		
	DEC '84	DEC '83	% CHANGE	1984	1983	% CHANGE	DEC '84	DEC '83	% CHANGE	1984	1983	% CHANGE
MOTORHOMES	61	77	-21%	1,160	1,202	- 3%	40	44	- 9%	880	850	+ 4%
TRAVEL TRAILERS	28	37	-24%	902	994	- 9%	37	35	+ 6%	837	878	- 4%
TRUCK CAMPERS	13	14	- 7%	196	182	+ 8%	9	4	+125%	214	199	+ 8%
CAMPING TRAILERS	19	12	+58%	1,547	1,389	+11%	6	5	+ 20%	246	260	- 5%
FIFTH-WHEELS	30	35	-14%	381	347	+10%	6	4	+50%	88	102	-14%

	FOR MONTH			YEAR-TO-DATE		
	DEC '84	DEC '83	% CHANGE	1984	1983	% CHANGE
SALES VOLUME	\$4,597,504	\$4,873,504	- 6%	\$89,812,136	\$85,278,478	+ 5%
TOTAL UNIT SALES	250	267	- 6%	6,451	6,401	+ 1%
NEW UNIT SALES	151	175	-14%	4,186	4,112	+ 2%
USED UNIT SALES	98	92	+ 7%	2,265	2,289	-1%

The year ended with RVB's Dealer Advisory Board (DAB) about equally divided between those who were up in sales and those who were down. In December '84, there was a modest drop from the previous year in sales volume and new unit sales were fewer. Profits were generally rated lower than normal, a fact of life with end-of-the-year RV sales.

It has been a leveling off year, completing a cycle that began with the second energy crisis and was followed by a boom in '82 through early '84. Most DAB dealers had good bottom lines in '84. Indications are that seasoned dealers are heading for a relatively stable period. No doubt there will be some wrinkles as manufacturers and dealers struggle for larger shares in the marketplace, but there do not appear to be any dark clouds on the horizon. The fuel supply is good, the economy is doing well, employment is up, interest rates are down, and the public attitude about RVing is positive. Well-managed RV dealerships should have a good 1985.

MOTORHOMES

Although the 21 percent drop for the month was considerable, new unit sales for the year-to-date are very close to those of last year. Considering the number of new competitors who came into the RV marketplace during the last year

and a half, it is apparent that the old dealers held their own very well. Some were up, some were down in unit sales, but most stayed fairly close to last year in sales volume. One DAB member dropped motorhomes from his inventory during the year, and another added them. Most dealers did not consider it necessary to blow out inventory just because business was slow this the month. Even with very high motorhome prices, sales have remained relatively strong. There is every reason to believe 1985 will see a repeat performance.

TRAVEL TRAILERS

Trailer dealers have had more than their share of problems with sales this year. Two factors are working against trailer sales: One, younger families aren't buying because of the considerable cost of buying both trailer and truck. Two, the popularity of the small car and the downsizing of all cars make it impossible to tow many trailers with today's automobiles, and a lot of people don't like trucks.

TRUCK CAMPERS

Although sales for this RV type are up for the DAB, it should be pointed out that the increase is due primarily to one dealer whose sales have been extraordinarily good. Some of the other DAB dealers who stocked just a few units

dropped even those during the year. As has always been the case, one should be in campers strongly, or not at all.

CAMPING TRAILERS

Percentage figures for new unit sales in December are impressive, but the actual unit numbers are small. However, the 11 percent increase for the year-to-date is the best record for all RV types in this report. Some dealers have the key to success with folding camping trailers. Profits were rated from fair to good.

FIFTH-WHEELS

The drop in December belies the fact that sales of this RV type have been very good all year. The 10 percent increase for the year-to-date in new unit sales is the second best of the five categories. Profits were rated fair. It seems quite likely that fivers will continue to be popular and for sales to increase steadily. The fact that retirees like them assures their future. Retirees have the time and the money—two very important ingredients for the success of this industry. Δ

Perspective is a compilation of data provided by RVB's Dealer Advisory Board (DAB), a group comprised of 23 dealers representing a cross-section of the U.S. Dealer body. This report is an attempt to reflect the current retail sales picture; it does not purport to indicate RV production or factory sales to dealers.

RVIA, DECEMBER

The marketing committee of the Recreation Vehicle Industry Association has announced that the total number of recreational vehicles shipped from manufacturers' plants during December 1984 was 25,800 units, up 4.0% from December 1983.

The shipment figures released by the association are contained in a report compiled for the membership by RVIA's marketing committee under the chairmanship of Allen Yoder Jr. of Jayco Incorporated, Middlebury, Indiana.

RV shipments were as follows in December 1984		December 1983	Percent Change	Cumu- lative 1984	Cumu- lative 1983	Percent Change
TRAVEL TRAILERS	3,200	3,800	- 15.8%	72,800	71,900	+ 1.3%
FIFTH- WHEELS	1,100	1,100	0	19,600	18,100	+ 8.3%
TRUCK CAMPERS	300	200	+ 50.0%	7,600	6,800	+ 11.8%
MULTI-USE VEHICLES	13,300	12,300	+ 8.1%	175,300	154,200	+ 13.7%
TYPE A: MOTOR- HOMES	3,200	2,600	+ 23.1%	42,100	33,400	+ 26.1%
TYPE B: VAN CAMPERS	500	500	0	7,100	5,600	+ 26.8%
TYPE C: MINI MOTOR- HOMES	1,700	1,900	- 10.5%	32,800	30,500	+ 7.5%
FOLDING CAMPING TRAILERS	2,500	2,400	+ 4.2%	40,900	37,500	+ 9.1%
TOTALS	25,800	24,800	+ 4.0%	398,200	358,000	+ 11.2%